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LS 151L.01: Introduction to the Humanities

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LS 195L(151) Introduction to the Humanities

Paul A. Dietrich
Office: LA 143
Phone: x2805
Hours: MW 2-3 & by
appointment
Section 01; 4 credits

Fall, 2001
MWF 1:10-2:00
UH 210
Th 11:10-12:00
(ULH 101) or
7:10-8:00 (SS 352)

An introduction to the western humanities through an investigation of selected texts from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, classical Greek and Latin antiquity, the New Testament and early Christian literature. Topics to be considered include: conceptions of self, family, community, cosmos and the gods; ideas of virtue, wisdom, piety, justice, law, and the state; the nature of the good life, good and evil, and the meaning of suffering; the role of myth, symbol and ritual; conceptions of creation, time, and temporality; varieties of visionary experience and the poetics of change, conversion and metamorphosis; the language of love and desire; imagery of journey and pilgrimage; genres of classical and biblical literatures; idealism, realism, humanism and naturalism.

"A classic is a book that has never finished saying what is has to say. A classic is something that tends to relegate the concerns of the moment to the status of background noise, but at the same time this background noise is something we cannot do without. (Conversely) A classic is something that persists as a background noise even when the most incompatible momentary concerns are in control of the situation."

Italo Calvino

Course Syllabus

Sept. 5,7	Introduction. Old Testament/Hebrew Bible: Genesis
10,12,14	Law (Torah) and Prophets: Exodus, Amos, Isaiah et al.
17,19,21	Wisdom (Writings): Song of Songs, Psalms, Job, et al.
24,26,28	Homer, The Odyssey. The Greek Epic
Oct. 1,3,5	Aeschylus, The Oresteia. The Birth of Greek Drama
8,10	Sappho and Greek Lyric
12	Midterm Exam
15,17,19	Sophocles and the Oedipus Cycle
22,24,26	Plato, the Presocratics and Greek Philosophy
29,31,2	Vergil, The Aeneid. The Roman Epic
Nov. 5,7,9	Ovid, Metamorphoses
14,16,19	New Testament: the Gospels (Luke)
26,28,30	Paul, Letters: Romans et al.
Dec. 3,5,7	Augustine, Confessions. The Poetics of Conversion
10,12,14	Conclusion and Review
18	Final Exam - 3:20-5:20

Required Reading

The New Oxford Annotated Bible (with Apocrypha) (Coogan, ed.)
Homer, The Odyssey (Fagles)
Aeschylus, The Oresteia (Fagles)
Sophocles, Three Tragedies (Greene)
Sappho, Sappho, (Barnard)
Plato, Five Dialogues (Grube)
Vergil, The Aeneid (Mandelbaum)
Ovid, Metamorphoses (Humphries)
St. Augustine, The Confessions (Boulding)

Course Requirements

1. Summary responses (1-2 pages) to ten of the plenary lectures due Monday following lecture. (No late responses)
2. Timely completion of assigned reading.
3. Weekly quizzes as needed.
4. Midterm Exam (Friday, October 12).
5. Final Exam (Tuesday, December 18, 3:20-5:20).

"Classics are certain texts, events, images, rituals, symbols and persons (in which we acknowledge) a disclosure of a reality we cannot but name truth...some disclosure of reality in a moment of 'recognition' which surprises, provokes, challenges, shocks, and eventually transforms us; an experience that upsets conventional opinions and expands the sense of the possible; indeed a realized experience of that which is essential, that which endures - the presence of classics in every culture is undeniable. Their memory haunts us. Their actual effects in our lives endure and await ever new appropriations, constantly new interpretations."

David Tracy